

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 AGR-20

EB-11 COME-00 AID-20 SS-15 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 TRSE-00 DODE-00

OPIC-12 SIL-01 LAB-06 OMB-01 /130 W

----- 078317

O R 301700 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4449

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEGUCIGALPA 1952

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAGR HO

SUBJ: WIND STORM DAMAGE TO BANANA PLANTATIONS

1. NORTH COAST BANANA PLANTATIONS WERE HIT BY SHORT BUT VIOLENT WIND STORM EVENING MAY 28. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT INDICATES THAT TELA RAILROAD COMPANY (UNITED FRUIT) SUFFERED BLOW- DOWN OF APPROXIMATELY 55 TO 60 PERCENT OF ITS PLANTATIONS. INDEPENDENT BANANA GROWERS AROUND THE AREA ALSO SUFFERED CONSIDERABLY. UNITED FRUIT OFFICIALS MADE PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF A LOSS OF 12 MILLION BOXES OF BANANAS OF WHICH 10-1/2 MILLION BOXES WOULD BE LOSS OF 1973 PRODUCTION AND 1-1/2 MILLION LOST FROM 1974 PRODUCTION.

2. APPARENTLY THE AREA AROUND LA CEIBA WHERE STANDARD FRUIT HAS ITS BANANA OPERATION WAS MUCH LESS DAMAGED AND
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PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES ARE THAT ONLY ABOUT 600,000 BOXES
WOULD BE LOST. IF SO THIS WOULD BE RELATIVELY LIGHT
DAMAGE.

3. COMMENT: IN 1972 UNITED FRUIT EXPORTED 26.8 MILLION
BOXES OF BANANAS. FOR 1973 BOTH BANANA COMPANIES WERE
EXPECTING RECORD SHIPMENTS. THIS IS THIRD YEAR WITHIN LAST
4 YEARS THAT HEAVY WIND DAMAGE WILL DECREASE BANANA PRODUC-
TION IN HONDURAS. BLOWDOWN WILL HAVE IMMEDIATE ADVERSE
IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ALONG
NORTH COAST. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS IMPACT WILL BE ADVERSE
BUT EXACT IMPACT DEPENDS UPON PRICE CHANGES IN U. S.
REACTING TO DROP IN SUPPLY OF BANANAS.

4. FONMIN BATRES TOLD AMB RYAN THIS MORNING THAT SITUATION
WAS SO SERIOUS THAT HE AND FINANCE MINISTER ACOSTA ARE
RECOMMENDING TO GENERAL LOPEZ THAT HE DECLARE NATIONAL
EMERGENCY.
RYAN

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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